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STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [VE](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - CHAVEZ' REGIONAL EFFORTS

¶1. On May 23, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 129,000) ran an editorial entitled, "Chavez in Latin America." Quote:

¶2. "Grupo de Diarios America is exploring...the phenomenon of Chavez' penetration in Latin America. From the abundant information gathered we can see evidence of the so-called 'social diplomacy'...which consists of penetrating a country's social structure, circumventing the government.... The 'Chavistas'...advance by providing material aid to the poor ...offering scholarships, health and education assistance as a means to teach Venezuelan and Cuban political ideology.... This has given special visibility to Chavez's political project and has put Caracas and Washington in a confrontation. Venezuela has surpassed the United States as the main donor.

¶3. "The 'Since Chavez' project is to finance movies that compete with 'Hollywood's dictatorship'...and fight U.S. cultural hegemony. It is possible that this 'Cold War' will increase tension....

¶4. "The 'Bolivarian leader' is not only set on establishing the 21st Socialist Revolution in his country, but also to export it in the continent, as we can see in Bolivia and Ecuador. None of this is unimportant for Chile, and our authorities would do well in evaluating this very carefully."

KELLY